

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Centers for Regional Excellence

Round II, 2008

Collaborating Communities are Competitive Communities

General Background

Since taking office, Governor Granholm has called on local communities to think and act regionally. Many communities have responded, forming regional coalitions for purposes of better land use planning, economic development and redevelopment, providing more cost-effective and efficient services or maintaining services they might otherwise lose.

What is the Centers for Regional Excellence Program?

In March of 2006, the Governor announced seven awardees in the first Centers for Regional Excellence program. The goal of the program is to increase instances of collaboration in order to help Michigan communities be more competitive, efficient and effective. We are looking for substantive, structural changes. The program supports models of collaboration that might ultimately be replicable for other communities in the future; helps communities tackle barriers to collaboration through technical assistance, outside mediation/facilitation and use of best practice; and encourages interesting/complex examples of collaboration.

The Centers for Regional Excellence Program seeks multiple communities in one area who will commit to formal agreements on a specific collaborative project. A lead entity will apply on behalf of the collaboration. Funded through an initial grant from MSHDA, the program anticipates selecting at least eight awardees. Grants will extend for a two year period, with the expectation for regular progress reporting by the lead entity.

What is Available to Awardees?

- A grant of up to \$25,000, distributed over two years, to aid in costs related to implementation of combining/coordinating services, such as payment of a project leader, new equipment systems, etc. State funds cannot be used for feasibility studies and planning consultants.
- A brief primer of best practices, available on the CRE website, www.michigan.gov/cre, on building strong collaboratives gathered from information provided by communities throughout Michigan who have put together ongoing successful programs
- Access to facilitators and research assistants, where necessary and available, from a Michigan university
- Access to mentors from around Michigan who have already participated in successful collaborations
- Priority access to a variety of state grants and services for collaborative use that are applicable to the collaborative process
- A website providing information on collaboration and model documents

Grant Applicant Requirements. The following must be included with your proposal:

1. Threshold requirement: each participating governmental unit (including school districts if applicable) must provide a resolution expressing support for participating in the specific collaborative project and a commitment to participate in a committee to pursue it. The resolution must accompany the proposal. A model resolution is attached to this RFP
2. Evidence of previous collaborative experience between and among these communities
3. Listing of the collaboration committee, including
 - One representative from each local government involved
 - Local stakeholders/community partners, such as chambers of commerce, banking community, major employers, labor unions, foundations, nonprofit organizations, local school districts or ISDs, university or community colleges, faith-based organizations, ethnic groups, community and constituency groups, local media, etc.
4. Letter of support from each participating nongovernmental stakeholder
5. Description of strategies for community engagement in a visioning process
6. Statement of proposed activities, including
 - Brief yet precise description of the activities
 - Why this project makes your area a better place to live, to work, to recreate. How will it impact your region, make it a more attractive place to do business?
 - What structural and infrastructure changes will result?
 - Other benefits/results
 - Explanation of barriers to cooperation
7. Explanation of how progress will be measured
8. Explanation of how the proposal will be implemented—an abbreviated action plan outline
9. Two year timeline
10. Budget: amount requested and specifically how state funds will be used
11. Local funding partners, such as foundations or banks, and the dollar amount, if committed, and how this money will be used.
12. Commitment of local dollars and in-kind services
13. Identification of spokesperson/leader of the group along with contact information
14. Identification of technical leader(s), if necessary. For example, if the project involves an area-wide dispatch system, which public safety official(s) will oversee the technical aspects of the project?
15. Identification of fiduciary
16. Participation in an interview with review committee, prior to awards, if requested. Members of your stakeholders committee must also take part.

Successful applicants will also be expected to turn in quarterly reports and to participate in a statewide event on regional collaboration in 2009

Priority Considerations

- Number and variety in types of communities involved (cities, townships, villages, counties, school districts; urban, suburban and rural areas
- Diversity and number of community stakeholders participating, in addition to government representatives
- Strength of your collaborative structure
- Likelihood of project success and sustainability
- Significant benefits to participating communities
- Commitment of leaders
- Emphasis on implementation (vs. planning) for use of grant funds
- Commitment of resources from local funding partners
- Centers that propose more unique forms of collaboration and those that appear to offer the greatest positive impact over time
- Replicability of project
- Early success in identifying and overcoming roadblocks
- Special attention will be given to collaborations that emphasize economic development initiatives and attract investment

Examples of Collaborative Activities

Economic development or redevelopment, energy and alternative energy, recreation, cultural and tourism activities, water and sewer, environmental protection and open space, urban growth boundaries and land use planning, combined agencies (housing, health, etc.), public safety, transit, technology sharing, planning, telecommunications, etc. *Be creative!*

(A list of the 2006 awardees as well as a brief summary of all proposals received is available on the CRE website.)

Eligible Applicants

- Any local unit of government, including DDA, authority, school district or ISD
- A participating nonprofit organization, such as those found on the list of potential stakeholders above

Workshop and interview information

We will hold a state-wide conference call on July 22 at 11 a.m. to answer questions/provide information for those interested in responding to the RFP. The call-in number is (877)873-8017; access number is 7799354. The number will also be available on the CRE website. In addition, members of the application judging committee will conduct phone or on-site interviews with representatives of select areas before the final decisions are made.

Program Timeline:

Proposals must be received by mail and email by September 3, 2008

Ten copies of your proposal, including supporting documents, must be mailed to:
Centers for Regional Excellence
c/o Michigan Association of Planning
219 S. Main St., Suite 300
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Attn: Andrea Brown

Proposals must be emailed to cre@michigan.gov.

Announcement of Awards: Mid to late October

Email/phone contacts
cre@michigan.gov
Maxine Berman: (313)456-0025

Website address: www.michigan.gov/cre

MODEL RESOLUTION CENTERS FOR REGIONAL EXCELLENCE

A resolution supporting participation in the Governor's Centers for Regional Excellence Program with (names of other communities here)

Whereas we recognize that the services we offer are important to the fabric of our community and often attract people to move here, and

Whereas regional collaboration may be one avenue to pursue to maintain or enhance some of the services we now offer, and

Whereas regional collaboration may afford us flexibility in our budgeting without diminishing the way of life in our community, and

Whereas regional collaboration may help us save money as well as providing effective and efficient services, and

Whereas regional collaboration has proved in many areas to be an effective land use tool, and

Whereas regional collaboration may help both our region and our own community be more economically competitive,

Now therefore be it resolved that (your community's name) agrees to participate in the Centers for Regional Excellence Program to achieve collaboration in (name the **specific** activity/program here),

Be it further resolved that (your community's name) will send a representative to participate in these discussions, and

Be it further resolved that the citizens of (your community's name) will be kept fully informed and provided opportunities for input into the process.

Resolution adopted on (date).